

extent of the permittee's compliance with the terms and conditions of the NWP; revisions to applicable statutory or regulatory authorities; and, the extent to which asserting discretionary authority would adversely affect plans, investments, and actions the permittee has made or taken in reliance on the permit; and, other concerns for the environment, including the aquatic environment under the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, and other relevant factors of the public interest.

(2) *Procedures.* (i) When considering whether to modify or revoke a specific authorization under an NWP, whenever practicable, the DE will initially hold informal consultations with the permittee to determine whether special conditions to modify the authorization would be mutually agreeable or to allow the permittee to furnish information which satisfies the DE's concerns. If a mutual agreement is reached, the DE will give the permittee written verification of the authorization, including the special conditions. If the permittee furnishes information which satisfies the DE's concerns, the permittee may proceed. If appropriate, the DE may suspend the NWP authorization while holding informal consultations with the permittee.

(ii) If the DE's concerns remain after the informal consultation, the DE may suspend a specific authorization under an NWP by notifying the permittee in writing by the most expeditious means available that the authorization has been suspended, stating the reasons for the suspension, and ordering the permittee to stop any activities being done in reliance upon the authorization under the NWP. The permittee will be advised that a decision will be made either to reinstate or revoke the authorization under the NWP; or, if appropriate, that the authorization under the NWP may be modified by mutual agreement. The permittee will also be advised that within 10 days of receipt of the notice of suspension, he may request a meeting with the DE, or his designated representative, to present information in this matter. After completion of the meeting (or within a reasonable period of time after suspending the authorization if no meeting is requested), the DE will take action to re-

instate, modify, or revoke the authorization.

(iii) Following completion of the suspension procedures, if the DE determines that sufficient concerns for the environment, including the aquatic environment under the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, or other relevant factors of the public interest so require, he will revoke authorization under the NWP. The DE will provide the permittee a written final decision and instruct him on the procedures to seek authorization under a regional general permit or an individual permit.

(3) The DE need not issue a public notice when asserting discretionary authority over a specific activity. The modification, suspension, or revocation will become effective by notification to the prospective permittee.

§330.6 Authorization by nationwide permit.

(a) *Nationwide permit verification.* (1) Nationwide permittees may, and in some cases must, request from a DE confirmation that an activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP. DEs should respond as promptly as practicable to such requests.

(2) If the DE decides that an activity does not comply with the terms or conditions of an NWP, he will notify the person desiring to do the work and instruct him on the procedures to seek authorization under a regional general permit or individual permit.

(3) If the DE decides that an activity does comply with the terms and conditions of an NWP, he will notify the nationwide permittee.

(i) The DE may add conditions on a case-by-case basis to clarify compliance with the terms and conditions of an NWP or to ensure that the activity will have only minimal individual and cumulative adverse effects on the environment, and will not be contrary to the public interest.

(ii) The DE's response will state that the verification is valid for a specific period of time (generally but no more than two years) unless the NWP authorization is modified, suspended, or revoked. The response should also include a statement that the verification will remain valid for the specified period of time, if during that time period,

the NWP authorization is reissued without modification or the activity complies with any subsequent modification of the NWP authorization. Furthermore, the response should include a statement that the provisions of § 330.6(b) will apply, if during that period of time, the NWP authorization expires, or is suspended or revoked, or is modified, such that the activity would no longer comply with the terms and conditions of an NWP. Finally, the response should include any known expiration date that would occur during the specified period of time. A period of time less than two years may be used if deemed appropriate.

(iii) For activities where a state has denied 401 water quality certification and/or did not agree with the Corps consistency determination for an NWP the DE's response will state that the proposed activity meets the terms and conditions for authorization under the NWP with the exception of a state 401 water quality certification and/or CZM consistency concurrence. The response will also indicate the activity is denied without prejudice and cannot be authorized until the requirements of §§ 330.4(c)(3), 330.4(c)(6), 330.4(d)(3), and 330.4(d)(6) are satisfied. The response will also indicate that work may only proceed subject to the terms and conditions of the state 401 water quality certification and/or CZM concurrence.

(iv) Once the DE has provided such verification, he must use the procedures of 33 CFR 330.5 in order to modify, suspend, or revoke the authorization.

(b) *Expiration of nationwide permits.* The Chief of Engineers will periodically review NWPs and their conditions and will decide to either modify, re-issue, or revoke the permits. If an NWP is not modified or reissued within five years of its effective date, it automatically expires and becomes null and void. Activities which have commenced (i.e., are under construction) or are under contract to commence in reliance upon an NWP will remain authorized provided the activity is completed within twelve months of the date of an NWP's expiration, modification, or revocation, unless discretionary authority has been exercised on a case-by-case basis to modify, suspend, or revoke the

authorization in accordance with 33 CFR 330.4(e) and 33 CFR 330.5 (c) or (d). Activities completed under the authorization of an NWP which was in effect at the time the activity was completed continue to be authorized by that NWP.

(c) *Multiple use of nationwide permits.* Two or more different NWPs can be combined to authorize a "single and complete project" as defined at 33 CFR 330.2(i). However, the same NWP cannot be used more than once for a single and complete project.

(d) *Combining nationwide permits with individual permits.* Subject to the following qualifications, portions of a larger project may proceed under the authority of the NWPs while the DE evaluates an individual permit application for other portions of the same project, but only if the portions of the project qualifying for NWP authorization would have independent utility and are able to function or meet their purpose independent of the total project. When the functioning or usefulness of a portion of the total project qualifying for an NWP is dependent on the remainder of the project, such that its construction and use would not be fully justified even if the Corps were to deny the individual permit, the NWP does not apply and all portions of the project must be evaluated as part of the individual permit process.

(1) When a portion of a larger project is authorized to proceed under an NWP, it is with the understanding that its construction will in no way prejudice the decision on the individual permit for the rest of the project. Furthermore, the individual permit documentation must include an analysis of the impacts of the entire project, including related activities authorized by NWP.

(2) NWPs do not apply, even if a portion of the project is not dependent on the rest of the project, when any portion of the project is subject to an enforcement action by the Corps or EPA.

(e) *After-the-fact authorizations.* These authorizations often play an important part in the resolution of violations. In appropriate cases where the activity complies with the terms and conditions of an NWP, the DE can elect to use the NWP for resolution of an after-the-fact

permit situation following a consideration of whether the violation being resolved was knowing or intentional and other indications of the need for a penalty. For example, where an unauthorized fill meets the terms and conditions of NWP 13, the DE can consider the appropriateness of allowing the residual fill to remain, in situations where said fill would normally have been permitted under NWP 13. A knowing, intentional, willful violation should be the subject of an enforcement action leading to a penalty, rather than an after-the-fact authorization. Use of after-the-fact NWP authorization must be consistent with the terms of the Army/EPA Memorandum of Agreement on Enforcement. Copies are available from each district engineer.

PART 331—ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL PROCESS

Sec.

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APPENDIX A—ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL PROCESS.

APPENDIX B—APPLICANT OPTIONS WITH PROFFERED INDIVIDUAL PERMIT.

AUTHORITY: 33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.; 33 U.S.C. 1344; 33 U.S.C. 1413.

SOURCE: 64 FR 11714, Mar. 9, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 64 FR 11714, Mar. 9, 1999, Part 331 was added, effective Aug. 6, 1999.

§ 331.1 Purpose and policy.

(a) *General.* The purpose of this Part is to establish policies and procedures to be used for the administrative appeal of permit applications denied with prejudice, and for the administrative appeals of declined individual permits. The appeal process will allow the affected party to pursue an administrative appeal of certain final Corps of En-

gineers decisions with which they disagree. The basis for an appeal, and the specific policies and procedures of the appeal process, are described in the following sections. It shall be the policy of the Corps of Engineers to promote and maintain an administrative appeal process that is independent, objective, fair, prompt, and efficient.

(b) This administrative appeal process provides only for the appeal of permit denials or declined individual permits.

(c) Permit decisions made by a division engineer or higher authority may be appealed to an Army official at least one level higher than the decision-maker. This higher Army official shall make the decision on the merits of the appeal, and may appoint a qualified individual to act as a review officer (as defined in § 331.2 of this Part). References to the division engineer in this Part shall be understood as also referring to higher-level Army authority when that authority is conducting an administrative appeal.

§ 331.2 Definitions.

The terms and definitions contained in 33 CFR Parts 320 through 330 are applicable to this regulation. In addition, the following terms are defined for the purposes of Part 331:

Affected party means a permit applicant who has received a permit denial, or who has declined a proffered individual permit.

Agent(s) means the affected party's business partner, attorney, consultant, engineer, planner, or any individual with legal authority to represent the appellant's interests.

Appealable action means a permit denial, or a declined individual permit, as these terms are defined below.

Appellant means an affected party who has filed an appeal of a permit denial or declined individual permit under the criteria and procedures of these regulations.

Declined permit means a proffered individual permit, including a letter of permission, that an applicant has refused to accept, because he has objections to the terms and conditions therein. A declined permit can also be an individual permit that the applicant originally accepted, but where such